which 28 were passenger steamers, the respective figures for the previous year being 690 and 55. The outbreak of war is bound to affect, and has affected, the trade of this port in common with others. One immediate effect is the cessation of passenger traffic to the port. The restriction in imports and exports, diversion of shipping from non-essential to essential commodities, and requisitioning of ships for the transport of men and war materials and for the many other purposes for which the merchant navy is put at a time of war, are but a few of the factors that affect the trade of a port. Nevertheless, so far Cochin is holding its own fairly well on the whole.

PUBLIC UTILITY WORKS

9. In view of the uncertainty created by the international situation we thought it wise not to embark on any great programme of capital expenditure. One-fourth of our total revenue is derived from our share in the customs revenue collected in the Port of Cochin. In view of stringent import restrictions and the consequent shrinkage in the volume of external trade, it is not possible to say what would be the position regarding customs revenue. If there is any serious fall in this item we would be faced with a difficult budgetary situation which would necessitate additional taxation and stringent curtailment of expenditure. It is partly to meet such a situation that the Revenue Reserve Fund has been built up. It is with a view to conserve our resources in every possible direction that I have deliberately refrained from embarking on any extensive schemes of improvement. During the year under review, however, we have been able to complete certain very necessary items of work. The work on the Shanmukham Canal at Irinjalakuda has been completed, and it was opened for traffic early in June. The revised estimate for the canal was Rs. 2·21 lakhs. The actual expenditure is not expected to go above Rs. 1·90 lakhs. There are still some necessary works to be carried out in the canal. Proper embankments have to be constructed and, if possible, the area of the basin must be enlarged. We are providing a sum of Rs. 20,000 in the next year for these works. The traffic in the canal is now free. From the 1st of Chingam, however, landing dues will be levied on all the traffic that passes through the canal, and it is expected that the revenue from this source would pay the interest and maintenance charges on the amount spent. Irinjalakuda is an important commercial centre, and the opening of this canal brings this area directly into contact with the port. It is hoped that this direct water-way communication

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will improve the economic prosperity of this town and its neighbourhood.

10. Until recently there was no High School in Mattancheri which was accessible to all classes of people. The T. D. High School was located within the premises of the temple, and, apart from accommodation being very unsatisfactory, it was not possible for pupils of all communities to attend this school. The question of providing a suitable building accessible to all classes has been engaging the attention of Government for many years, and it was only in the year under review it was possible to supply this much needed want. The Lower Secondary Girls' School at Mattancheri also was located in a very congested area. The two schools are now housed in two magnificent buildings which are probably the best of their kind in the State. These buildings have been built at a cost of over Rs. 1 lakh from funds provided by the Devaswam department.

11. In the current year's budget there was a provision of Rs. 50,000 for improvements to the irrigation system in the Chittur taluk. In the course of detailed investigations formidable technical difficulties were encountered, especially with regard to the construction of a high level canal leading to the Kambalatharai Eri. It was not, therefore, possible to start this work during the current year. The Public Works department is now engaged in investigating the scheme in greater detail to see if it is possible to take it on hand. It is not possible to say what the outcome of the investigation will be. Anyhow, in view of the importance of the work contemplated, a lump sum provision of Rs. 50,000 has again been made in the next budget.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

12. The legislative activity of this Council during the current year covers a very wide field, and it is not necessary for me to recount what has been done. The Government introduced a Bill to give fixity of tenure to *verumpattam* tenants. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee, and when the report of the committee was received it was found that radical changes had been made in some of the clauses of the Bill. Apart from the changes made by the Select Committee, the amendments of which notices were given by a great many members of this Council indicated that the divergence of opinion on this measure was very great. Under these circumstances Government thought that it was not possible to proceed with the consideration of this measure. While Government are fully alive to the importance

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